

Designing Coaching and Mentoring Programs

This self-review checklist allows preschool programs to understand the components of effective coaching and mentoring programs and assess their progress towards implementing these components. Technical assistance and professional development providers can use this tool to assist state-, district-, and preschool-level administrators in setting up a new program or advise preschool administrators and coaching staff on how to improve an existing program.

For each element listed, record whether it has been fully, partially, or not at all incorporated at the school. If the element has not yet been fully incorporated, make notes of what further guidance is needed. If you need additional ideas for setting up or improving your coaching or mentoring program, review the related media presentations and artifacts in *See How it Works* and think about what might work in your classroom.

Note: This tool is based on the experiences of Early Reading First programs, including the Tempe Early Reading First Partnership, Ready to Learn Providence, and the Syracuse City School District.

| Self-Review: Key Components of a Coaching and Mentoring Program | | | | |
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| Building a Framework | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. Assign an administrative staff member to oversee the program. | | | | |
| 2. Obtain staffing, professional, and financial support from preschool-, district-, and state-level administrators. | | | | |
| 3. Include preschool teaching staff in goal-setting and planning. | | | | |
| 4. Identify professional development and technical assistance sources (e.g., TA centers and ECE expert consultants). | | | | |

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| 5. Establish confidentiality guidance and rules. | | | | |
| 6. Select coaches and mentors who have a sound understanding of early childhood development and how young children learn. | | | | |
| 7. Select coaches and mentors who have a clear understanding of how adults learn. | | | | |
| Defining Roles | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. Coaches and mentors have clear job descriptions. | | | | |
| 2. Coach, mentor, and mentee roles/relationships are well defined. | | | | |
| 3. Teachers and teaching assistants have a clear understanding of coach and mentor roles. | | | | |
| 4. Coaches, mentors, and mentees have a clear understanding of the nature of their relationships with administrative staff. | | | | |
| Integrating Key Features | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. Coaches, mentors, and teachers are given sufficient time to form trusting partnerships that are positive, reciprocal, and collegial. | | | | |

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| 2. Coaches and mentors build on the previous knowledge base and past experiences teachers bring with them. | | | | |
| 3. The coaching and mentoring programs foster a problem-solving and self-reflective approach to helping teachers improve practice. | | | | |
| 4. Coaches and mentors demonstrate or model instruction using various methods for teaching a skill and within a variety of classroom situations (e.g., small and large groups, during routines and transitions). | | | | |
| 5. Coaches and mentors provide instructional resources for teachers (e.g., materials, handbooks, lesson planning and activity books, manipulative and games, etc.) | | | | |
| 6. Child-level and class-level assessment and progress monitoring data are used to identify needs and focus professional development activities. | | | | |
| 7. Coaches and mentors collaborate with teachers to develop action plans for improvement. | | | | |
| Scheduling Coaching and Mentoring Sessions | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. On-site coaching and mentoring sessions are scheduled on a daily or weekly basis. | | | | |
| 2. Teacher-coach and/or teacher-mentor teams meet frequently to examine classroom practice. | | | | |

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| 3. Coaches and mentors help to identify and plan ongoing professional development activities scheduled throughout the year based on teacher and classroom needs. | | | | |
| 4. Coaches and mentors participate in monthly staff development meetings and activities. | | | | |
| 5. Special coaching and/or mentoring assistance and extra support are provided to orient and train new teachers. | | | | |
| Training Coaches and Mentors | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. The coaching and mentoring programs provide training in preschool language and literacy content and instructional strategies. | | | | |
| 2. Coaches and mentors are trained in specialized skills for scaffolding teacher learning and providing feedback (e.g., communication, observation, role playing, etc.). | | | | |
| 3. Coaches and mentors are trained in the use of self-reflection, planning, observation, and progress monitoring tools. | | | | |
| 4. The coaching and mentoring programs have the flexibility to respond to staff feedback and adapt training to meet individual teacher needs. | | | | |
| Sustaining Practice | Fully Incorporated | Partially Incorporated | Not Incorporated | Guidance and Resources Needed |
| 1. Coaching and mentoring is ongoing and a long-term process. | | | | |

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| 2. As teachers master instructional skills, they are used as peer mentors for classroom teaching assistants and newly hired teachers. | | | | |
| 3. Classroom teaching assistants are included in staff meetings, professional development training activities, and coaching and mentoring sessions as needed. | | | | |
| 4. Preschool directors meet regularly with coaches and mentors to review progress in implementing research-based classroom instruction and meeting language and literacy goals. | | | | |
| 5. The program gives coaches and mentors opportunities to meet with their peers to share, learn, and collaborate. | | | | |